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News Release ~ Communiqué

Book publishers make technological leap with help through Canada-B.C. agreement

VANCOUVER, July 13, 1995 - B.C. book publishers will receive support under the Canada-B.C. Agreement on Communications and Cultural Industries to establish a computer communications network to improve their ability to compete, Canadian Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy and B.C. Minister of Small Business, Tourism and Culture Bill Barlee announced today.

The computer project is an initiative of the Association of B.C. Book Publishers, a non-profit organization representing 52 British Columbia publishers with annual revenues of more than $25.0 million.

"The international book publishing industry - where British Columbia firms compete - uses some of the most up-to-date computer technology available," said Mr. Dupuy. "This support under the terms of the Canada/B.C. agreement will allow B.C. publishers, whose viability is very important to the cultural vitality of British Columbia, to improve their efficiency in producing and marketing their books."

Mr. Barlee said: "Over the years, the Association of B.C. Book Publishers has proven itself to be a highly professional organization, offering a wide range of services to help its members succeed in this competitive industry. This assistance means that the province's entire book publishing sector will have access to a computer information network that will allow them to advance to a new level of production capability."

Estimated total cost of establishing the computer information network, which will be known as the Publishers Information Exchange, is $1.02 million. The Canada-B.C. Agreement will provide up to $550,000 in the form of a non-repayable contribution.

The project is in two stages. The first stage will see the PIE network established at the association level, with a main computer to be installed at the association's offices in Vancouver. The second part will allow individual publishers to acquire electronic equipment on a 50/50 cost-shared basis so they can link into the association's network and become more efficient in producing and marketing books.

Once operational, the new computer network will allow publishers to:

respond to customer orders more quickly;
exploit new market opportunities through the Internet;
reduce production costs by transmitting text and images to printers electronically;
build shared databases; and
reduce costs for color production and data storage.

The agreement is a two-year, $9.0 million federal-provincial initiative designed to help develop and apply innovative technology, to create new markets for products and services, and to strengthen the industrial infrastructure by sharing costs with project proponents.

The agreement is administered by Industry Canada and Canadian Heritage on the federal side, and on the provincial side by the Ministry of Employment and Investment and the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture.

Funding for this project was provided for in the 1995 federal budget and is therefore built into the existing fiscal framework. This initiative is an example of how this government is prioritizing its spending so that it can better serve Canadians by making efficient use of their tax dollars.

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